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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 001936

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KISL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [COUNTER TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: BLOODY CLASHES CONTINUE BETWEEN ROYG AND SHIA
REBEL AL-HOUTHI

Classified By: Charge d'Affairs Nabeel Khoury; reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Embassy sources contradict press accounts that ROYG forces encircled extremist Shi'ite leader Hussein al-Houthi in the northern region of Marran on August 5. Rather it seems fighting has intensified in the past few days and continues to be particularly bloody for the ROYG.

2. (C) Local press quoted Ministry of Defense sources saying ROYG forces controlled the Jabal al-Hakimi area where al-Houthi and his aides were reportedly holed-up. Despite high casualties, failed cease-fires, and rising concerns over sectarian strife and tribal intervention, the ROYG maintains that the conflict will soon be resolved positively. Press accounts cite low casualty numbers and repeatedly talk of mediation efforts.

3. (C) Comment: The ROYG's optimistic portrayal of events is likely designed to mask the Central Government's difficulties in quelling al-Houthi's rebellion. Prolonged large scale fighting and reported tribal discontent could threaten Saleh's careful balance between tribal and political interests in the Sa'da region. End Comment.
KHOURY